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ABSTRACT

Current knowledge and practices in the field of preprimary teacher education are discussed with respect to unique characteristics of the field, general issues in teacher education and preprimary education, and recent developments in inservice education. Unique characteristics of the field of preprimary teacher education include role ambiguity, variations in program goals, and low wages. General issues in the areas of teacher education and preprimary education include (1) the elusiveness of criteria for good teaching, (2) the impact of training on teacher performance, (3) the "feed-forward" problem stemming from the provision of content and methods to students who have not yet had experience in settings where the training is relevant), and (4) problems of teacher training program content. Recent developments in inservice education are discussed in terms of two types of inservice education: the "advisory approach" and its variant, the Enabler Model; and the Child Development Associate project. (RH)

THE EDUCATION OF PREPRIMARY TEACHERS

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INTRODUCTION

Although specialists in the field of preprimary education differ on many aspects of goals and methods, they generally agree that the competence and attitudes of teachers are major determinants of program effectiveness.[1, 2] In spite of this agreement, few empirical studies of teaching have been reported, and virtually no research on teacher preparation and education has been accumulated.

From the general literature on preprimary education, it appears that the majority of people teaching children under 5 years of age (in some countries, under 6 years) have had no preservice education at all, and most have had only sporadic workshops or short courses. The proportion of trained to untrained personnel is not simply a function of the level of industrialization of a given country, nor is it simply related to per capita income or average educational attainment. Complex historical, political, and economic forces seem to be at work (cf. Goodnow & Burns, Factors Affecting Policies in Early Childhood Education: An Australian Case, in this volume). One of the few fairly reliable generalizations about the field of preprimary education and its teachers is that the younger the child being taught, the less training the teacher is likely to have, the less status and prestige she enjoys, the fewer qualifications are required, the lower the wages, and the longer the hours of work.[3]

UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FIELD

In many respects, the education of preprimary teachers shares some of the same problems as the education of primary and secondary teachers. However, education for preprimary instructors also possesses some unique problems stemming from the unique characteristics of the field. These latter characteristics are taken up first in the discussion below, followed

by consideration of the points in which education for preprimary teachers is similar to that for other groups.

In regions where preservice education is available for preprimary personnel, it is offered in a variety of institutions reflecting the wide variety of settings in which such personnel are employed. Some training is available in social work or social welfare departments, or in institutions sponsored by social work agencies (Husen & Postlethwaite, in press). Other training is offered in nursing or medical agencies or in highly specialized institutions such as Montessori institutes, teacher training colleges, home economics departments of colleges or secondary schools, vocational or technical secondary schools, or human or child development divisions of psychology departments in colleges or universities.

Role Ambiguity

Such diversity of training arrangements as well as employment settings (e.g., nursery schools, creches, kindergartens, day care centers, etc.) operating for different lengths of the day and serving a variety of age groups exacerbates a longstanding problem caused by unclear role boundaries and role ambiguity, a situation which in turn leads to ambiguity and confusion about appropriate goals and content for those training and education courses that are available.

Variations in Program Goals

Questions concerning what proportion of time available for training should be allocated to educational or health issues (and within these, the issues of how much emphasis should be given to theoretical versus pedagogical studies or to the development of techniques for working with parents) are constant sources of discussion in the field (cf. Katz, 1977).

Almost all reports and proposals concerning the education of preprimary teachers emphasize the acquisition of skills and knowledge for building strong ties with parents and for helping parents to improve their childrearing. In addition, working closely with other professionals in such related fields as medicine, social work, nutrition, and primary education is seen as desirable (cf. National Seminar, 1978). In the case of developing countries such as India, for example, many teachers are expected to recruit the mothers and children into the program as well as teach childrearing, hygiene, crafts, home management, and sanitation (Pakjam, 1978; Grant, 1982).

Low Wages

Another special characteristic of the preprimary field is the extent to which education programs are staffed by volunteers, in some cases because of the lack of funds with which to pay staff, but in others in order to create an informal, family-like atmosphere. In still other programs the motive underlying the use of volunteers is to strengthen relations between the home and the preschool or to help mothers learn to work with children by voluntary participation in the preschool (Singer, 1979; Playgroups, in press). These volunteer groups tend to undermine arguments put forward by professional associations and by teacher trainers that teachers of young children need special skills and knowledge, as well as advanced training by which to acquire both.

Aside from the relatively large role played by volunteers at this level of schooling, preprimary education seems to be caught in a vicious cycle: In the absence of training and qualifications, many preprimary teachers have few skills and are therefore very poorly paid; because of the poor pay, people who do have skills will not seek employment in preprimary

education settings. Because employees lack sophisticated skills or training, clients as well as sponsoring agencies are unwilling to increase pay. In addition to the poor skills/low pay cycle, it is a fact that the younger the child in the setting, the lower the child/adult ratio. This means that when pay is increased, the costs of a program increase relatively dramatically without corresponding increases in the number of children assigned to an individual teacher (cf. Woodhead, 1979). Furthermore, rigorous or lengthy training is unlikely to attract candidates when the ultimate pay scale is so low. Nevertheless, some attempts to break this cycle with new training initiatives and with the introduction of "professional" standards and qualifications have been reported and are discussed below.

GENERAL ISSUES IN TEACHER EDUCATION AND PREPRIMARY EDUCATION

Elusiveness of Criteria for Good Teaching

Education of teachers for all levels of schooling suffers from the absence of agreed-upon criteria of effectiveness--definitions of or consensus upon what constitutes "good" teaching (Medley, 1982). The teacher education field is so diverse in terms of "philosophy," curriculum styles, ages of children served, length of the teaching day, scope of functions of teachers, and so forth that such consensus on what constitutes good teaching is unlikely to be achieved on a field-wide basis. And, since conventional academic achievement is rarely of central concern to preprimary staff, standardized achievement test scores are unlikely to be accepted as appropriate or meaningful measures of teachers' effectiveness from which inferences about the worth of training can be made.

Impact of Training

Another problem preprimary education shares with all other levels of schooling is that even in those regions where teacher training is available, doubts about its impact on ultimate teacher performance are widespread (cf. Raths and Katz, 1982). Some of these doubts are cast in terms of the relatively greater impact of the ultimate workplace on teacher performance as compared to the impact of the experiences provided during the preservice training. Other doubts are expressed by both trainees themselves and the practitioners who receive them after training has been completed. The latter critics assert that, from their "objective" view, training offered in preservice programs is too theoretical and idealistic. The candidates themselves, from their "subjective" view, also claim that the training they receive is not sufficiently relevant or useful and reject it as too theoretical as well. It is possible that both these views are justified and appropriate, but without agreed-upon criterion measures it is difficult to empirically test them.

The "Feed-forward" Problem

One of the major difficulties in designing and assessing the impact of preservice training programs is the so-called "feed-forward" problem (Katz, Raths, Mohanty, Kurachi, & Irving, 1981)--namely, the problem stemming from the fact that preservice training consists largely of giving students answers to questions they have not yet asked, or of providing students with methods for dealing with eventualities rather than actualities. The phenomenon includes resistance from the student at the time of exposure to given learnings and, later, protestations that the same instruction had not been provided, should have been provided, or should have been provided in stronger doses. Thus, for example, the advice that

students should be more fully trained in Piagetian psychology and methods may seem reasonable to a teacher enjoying success in her fifth year on the job, but may seem irrelevant to a candidate struggling with the forthcoming challenges of managing 30 reluctant preschoolers.

This "feed forward" problem, no doubt generic to anticipatory professional training in all professions, becomes an issue mainly when the training staff expects trainees to appreciate the relevance and usefulness of the training exercises and components provided for them at the time they are occurring. This hypothesized feed forward situation implies that upon later reflection, students' feelings, attitudes, beliefs, opinions, and evaluations with respect to a given experience obtained earlier during their training may change, although candidates are unlikely to believe so. Thus, for example, students might be enrolled in a course in children's literature which requires them to read and annotate 100 children's books, and resent the exercise at the time. However, it may be that during their actual employment at a later time the graduate will change the meaning of that set of experiences, thinking, "I hated it then, but now I'm glad they made me go through with it, etc." Or, conversely, the graduate may look back on an exercise enjoyed and dismiss it as irrelevant.

In terms of the feed forward problem, it may be useful to look at teacher education in terms of three time periods:

Period I:	Prospective	Opinions, feelings, beliefs, etc. before training
Period II:	Introspective	Opinions, feelings, beliefs, etc. during training
Period III:	Retrospective	Opinions, feelings, beliefs, etc. after training

Periods I and II may be characterized by the conviction that one knows how one is going to feel during the next periods. Opinions, feelings, beliefs, etc. may be positive or negative about the anticipated or actual experiences during both periods, or they may be mixed. The experiences of Period II cannot be changed during Period III, but the evaluations of them may change once or often fluctuate during Period III. An example taken from another field is a study of the graduates of a business school, all of whom shared the same curriculum (Neel, 1978). Graduates were asked after 3 years, 7 to 10 years, and 12 to 15 years how the curriculum might have been better or improved. Graduates with 3 years on the job emphasized increasing the "how to" elements of the curriculum; graduates with 7 to 10 years of experience suggested additional courses in human relations, psychology and sociology, and how to get along in organizations. Graduates with 12 to 15 years experience stressed the need for additional courses in philosophy, religious studies, and literature. Though graduates might not have accepted their mentors' predictions that they might have such opinions in the future, Neel points out that

> It was quite obvious that the more experienced business professionals were more interested than the younger men in reassessing who they were as individuals and at what place they had arrived in their lives as well as their careers. (p. 7)

In a sense, then, it is in the nature of things that students cannot know how they will feel about a given experience at a later point in time. The actual experiences obtained during the training never change; only the meanings put upon them and the evaluations given them may change later in the light of subsequent teaching experiences. It should be noted that the meanings (including feelings, attitudes, beliefs, opinions, evaluations, etc.) associated with the experiences obtained during training may be correct or incorrect, positive or negative, at the time they occur as

well as in retrospect. In other words, the feed forward hypothesis states that though the experiences obtained during training never change, retrospectively, in the light of on-the-job experience, graduates may ascribe new meanings to them.

Another issue associated with the feed forward paradigm is whether such retrospective changes in the meanings and values assigned to earlier experiences are systematic, and if so, what is the system? If the hypothesis is empirically confirmed, it could imply that teacher education must be designed and rationalized on bases other than the extent to which students accept or like what is offered (at the time they experience it) or whether they can even grasp the relevance of its components. Ideal bases for rationalizing the design or content of teacher education should at least include theories of adult learning and of professional or occupational socialization. However, it appears that the pattern and structure of training programs are determined more by tradition, economic exigencies, and common sense than by such theoretical formulations. Confirmation of the feed forward hypothesis would require longitudinal studies of several cohorts of candidates from their training through several years of employment.

Problems of Content

Another problem shared by early childhood teacher training and training for other levels of schooling concerns the appropriateness and sufficiency of the content of the training courses. Invariably, course revisions involve additions of new specialities and experiences, giving rise to steady increases in the length of training required. Questions such as, What proportion of the required work should be studied in how much depth? arise constantly. However, it is not clear what criteria, theories,

or rules for decision making should be used to answer these kinds of content questions.

From the scattered reports available, the preservice education of preprimary teachers appears to be following a trend noted in education for teaching at the upper levels--namely, toward longer periods of training and greater proportions of the training being allocated to theoretical or "foundation" subjects. One of the best known specialized training programs for those who work with young children, nursery nurses training in the United Kingdom, has undergone great changes in the last 10 years. In 1974 the 2-year course was changed so that instead of its traditional three-fifths time allocated to practice and two-fifths to theoretical or academic work, the proportions are now reversed. In addition, the required age for entry was raised from 16 to 18 years. Many of the specialized nursery nurse training institutions and programs raised their general academic entrance requirements as well, and certifying examinations have been upgraded substantially. These changes reflect increases in the knowledge base (particularly in the area of child development and parent/child relations), increasing complexity of childrearing and education in general, and strong pressures within the field for greater professionalization (Batten, 1981).

A developmental perspective. Considerable interest has been shown in addressing such questions as those outlined above in terms of developmental stages trainees are thought to undergo. Katz (1972) proposed that in the case of preschool teachers, most of whom had little or no preservice training, the aspects and components of teaching with which they need assistance change as experience accrues.

Four stages of preschool teacher development have been hypothesized as occurring in sequence, although the duration of each stage may vary among individuals. The first of the four hypothesized stages is called survival. This stage is characterized by the trainee or teacher being preoccupied with management and control of the group of children, keeping them reasonably busy and content, having the children accept authority and accede to demands, and being liked by them. A second stage, called consolidation, is defined as a period that begins when the trainee or teacher has mastered control and management of the whole group and can provide suitable activities to which the children respond favorably. Now the trainee or teacher becomes concerned about individual children whose behavior is different from that of most of the others, who appear to be atypical to the teacher, or who are seen not to be learning or responding as well as the teacher would like.

A third stage, called renewal, beginning perhaps after 4 or 5 years of teaching, is characterized by a subjective feeling of becoming stale or weary of the same routines--tired of reading the same stories, singing the same songs, celebrating the same festivals, and perhaps finding that daily work with young children has become intellectually under-stimulating. Teachers in this stage typically ask for fresh ideas and techniques, new materials and methods, and enjoy and welcome opportunities to exchange ideas and materials with colleagues in workshops. A fourth stage, called maturity, reached earlier by some than by others, includes the teacher's acquisition of self-renewal strategies but is marked further by the tendency to ask deeper and broader questions about the nature of education and its relationship to society, about historical, philosophical, or ethical issues in teaching, and so forth. The latter stage has been difficult to

validate, since many preschool personnel move up into directorships or other ancillary or administrative positions if they stay in the field as long as 5 years.

Implications for teacher training program content. The application of developmental stage constructs to preprimary teacher education can have three kinds of benefits. First, trainees and teachers can be helped to accept their own "survival" struggles at the beginning of their careers as "in the nature of things" and can thus put their lack of assurance and occasional fumbling into perspective, achieving greater patience with their own learning processes. Second, teacher education courses can be designed in such a way as to concentrate on providing at least minimal "survival skills" for trainees, but could do so in such a way as to strengthen trainees' dispositions to be resourceful and to go on learning after the basic survival stage is over. That is to say, one could offer trainees very practical "how to" exercises and equip them with activities to carry out during their initial teaching experiences (perhaps enough for the first 2 or 3 months of teaching). Such activities and projects could help trainees get started; as soon as they feel comfortable with these "survival kit" activities in the real life setting with the children, they can begin to develop their own activities and style, making plans for classroom activities over the longer period. The third and related value of looking at teacher education from a developmental perspective is that courses could begin with the very practical "how to" aspects of teaching and end with the theoretical subjects (e.g., psychology, philosophy, etc.), thus reversing the typical sequence.

It may also be useful to reconsider the best time period during training at which to provide the observational experiences that are usually

given strong emphasis in the training of preprimary and primary teachers. If there is any validity at all to the application of the developmental stage metaphor to teacher training, and to the four hypothesized stages outlined above, it suggests that exercises in the observation of children may be more fruitful if taken after having had some actual classroom experiences with children rather than before, as is customary. Young, inexperienced students generally find observation of children unrewarding, if not boring. Studies of the extent to which exercises in observation of children affect subsequent teaching skills have not been found, yet these exercises remain an almost sacred component of many training courses. Perhaps candidates' restlessness with classroom observation exercises also fits into the feed forward hypothesis in that retrospectively, graduates will acknowledge their value. However, no empirical data addressed to this issue have been found.

Field experiences. Of all of the components of a preservice education course most strongly recommended for teacher education, teaching practice or field experience appears to have top priority, though the amount of practice provided in preservice teacher education courses varies widely. Arrangements for field experiences also differ from country to country. Some countries require practical or field experiences in a suitable or approved setting before admission to a formal certificate or diploma course (e.g., Sweden). Others feature practical experience similar to an internship throughout the period of training (e.g., nursery nurses' training in the United Kingdom). Still others provide as many as 3 years of academic work prior to field practice (e.g., courses for social pedagogues in the Federal Republic of Germany--cf. Austin, 1976). Empirical studies of the effects of different amounts of practice are few and inconclusive (Davis, 1975).

In an interesting series of studies of selected characteristics of students and the field placements to which they were assigned for practice teaching, Becher and Ade (1982) reported data suggesting that students relatively low in self-confidence perform better in practice teaching when matched with a cooperating teacher who is relatively weak or "underwhelming." Apparently such students' self-confidence is further eroded when matched with a cooperating teacher who appears to be full of assurance and who makes teaching "look easy." Becher and Ade's research suggests that attempts to match students' characteristics (such as self-assurance) with those of the personnel in the field placement could increase the effectiveness of the practice teaching or field experiences provided in training.

The relative merits of imposing the practical or field experience requirements earlier rather than later in the training course are also under scrutiny. Early field experience is assumed to have the advantage of giving trainees better opportunities to try on the future teaching role and therefore to be better able to make an informed career choice. Early field experience is also assumed to make theoretical studies more meaningful and useful, since the practical and theoretical components occur simultaneously. However, one investigation of students in training for elementary teaching has indicated that the early field experience overwhelmed the students and that their more theoretical courses, rather than assuming greater relevance, became distractions from the urgent and salient realities of coping with the field setting (Luttrell, Bane, & Mason, 1981). The results of another study also failed to confirm the assumed benefits of early field experience (Shorter, 1975).

The qualities of practice and setting: Another major issue in need of empirical investigation is the frequent complaint of insufficient opportunities for students to observe "good" practices. Questions concerning both the timing and amount of practice become virtually irrelevant if the community lacks settings in which trainees can observe such practices. In poor conditions the truism that "practice makes perfect" leads rather to a situation in which "bad practice makes perfectly bad." It can be argued that trainees do learn from imperfect or "bad" practices in field placements. However, just what is learned is not clear.

Students in preservice education programs are also known to complain often that the field settings in which they practice require them to engage in pedagogical practices that their trainers and supervisors deplore or reject. The "bad field setting" predicament implies that the supervisors or tutors have special responsibilities to help trainees interpret and understand the realities of the field settings as well as to cultivate their capacities to adjust to those realities while simultaneously preparing to be able to ultimately progress beyond them. The apparent gulf between educators of teachers and practitioners in field settings has not been studied empirically, but is reflected in much comment in the general literature in education (cf. Katz, 1977). Such discrepancies between the idealized practices advocated by the staff of teacher education institutions and the actual professional practices in the field are no doubt generic to professional education in all areas.

At the other extreme of the field experience spectrum, some training courses may provide practice only in idealized laboratory settings, which may be different from more typical extra-campus settings. The more "artificial" training environment may encourage graduates to learn skills

which are actually maladaptive to field settings outside the university situation. However, helping trainees to become aware of a range of alternative practices and field conditions by using films, slides, videotapes, and other materials may minimize the distorting effects of constant exposure to "bad" practices or to highly idealized settings. In addition, simulation exercises, role playing, microteaching, and the use of specially prepared slides or videotaped critical incidents in teaching, together with solicitations of responses to specially prepared questions about the incidents presented, may help students to transcend local practices (Medley, 1982).

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN INSERVICE EDUCATION

Inasmuch as most preprimary personnel have little or no preservice education, various approaches to the education of those already employed merit particular attention. Two types of inservice education for preprimary personnel are outlined below, and a brief summary of an extensive inservice education project is outlined.

The "Advisory Approach" to Inservice Education

The first method of inservice education is known as the "advisory approach" (Katz, 1974); employed in Great Britain, parts of Australia, and sporadically in the United States and elsewhere, this method grew from the earlier use of school inspectors (Bolam, 1982). In the early 1970s Queensland became the first Australian state to adopt a policy of statewide access to preschool education. This very large state was divided into nine regions, and advisors were assigned to provide technical assistance to preschool classes within the regions, some of which are extremely isolated geographically. Many of the preschool teachers in country schools are

very young, fresh from their training college courses taken in the larger cities of the state. These teachers are assigned to "country service" for at least the first 2 years of their teaching careers. Preschool advisors, appointed by the Department of Education of the state from among practicing preschool teachers, serve as advisors for 3 years, after which they return to preschool classroom teaching. These advisors are expected to make regular visits to all preschool classes within their regions, to provide moral as well as technical support, and to conduct workshops on particular teaching or curriculum issues. Many of them also provide services through resource or teachers' centers in the region. These preschool advisors have no inspection or sanctioning authority; their roles are limited to providing support and encouragement to practitioners.

The Enabler Model

A variant of the advisory approach is the Enabler Model of inservice training (Katz, 1972), developed especially for the inservice education of Head Start teachers in the United States and subsequently adapted for the support of day care staff (Holt, n. d.). This variant of the advisory approach may be useful in regions just beginning to develop their preprimary resources.

The objectives of the model are to help the local communities served by the Head Start program to define and achieve their own goals and purposes, to offer help and advice in such a way as to enable local leaders and participants in the program to discover and develop their own strengths and talents as well as to solve problems on their own, and to assist local staff and participants to build and strengthen relationships with their own local resources and agencies. Qualifications of consultants engaged to perform in the Enabler Model include extensive experience in early child-

hood education and related fields, special skills in working with parents of diverse backgrounds, and demonstrated ability to be sensitive to the community's strengths and resources (Holt, n. d.).

The model is conceived in terms of two phases: "initiation" and "maintenance." During the initiation phases the "enabler" is expected to meet with all community groups involved in the programs (e.g., staff, volunteers, parents, social, medical and nutritional workers, primary school liaison persons, and so forth). During formal and informal discussion with each group and among the groups the enabler encourages and facilitates the expression of community members' preferences, stressing the goals and purposes the members themselves want to achieve. During the second, or maintenance, phase of the model the enabler's role is to provide support for smooth operation of the program. During this phase the enabler's functions include supplying information, serving as a link between all segments of the wider community involved in the welfare of the preschool children in the program, interpreting the program in terms of its own agreed-upon goals, serving as a source of support and encouragement, appreciating staff strengths, occasionally demonstrating skills and techniques, and serving as a neutralizer of conflict (cf. Katz, 1979).

Although no controlled empirical studies have been reported of the application of the Enabler Model or other variants of the advisory approach to preprimary inservice education, the following points have emerged from several years of experience. First, advisors or enablers have had to struggle to resist the temptation to give advice too early in the development of their relationships with the program or community to be served. Problems arising from giving advice too early are not a matter of the rightness of the advice, but of allowing enough trust between the advisor

and advisees to be developed so that the advice can be interpreted as an offer to help rather than as criticism from an outside expert.

Second, advisors who live in the community being advised have the advantage of greater understanding of local concerns and preferences, but they have the great disadvantage of being in too close and continual contact with the participants to be able to have a detached, respectful, and realistic overview of participants' contributions to the day-to-day quality of the program offered to children.

Third, it appears that, depending on the distances between preprimary settings, a maximum number to be served by any one advisor or enabler might be between six and ten. This makes the advisory approach to inservice education very expensive, since the qualifications for advisors are at the highest level available in the educational system and salaries tend to reflect these high educational qualifications. In addition, work of the enabler is by definition itinerant and incurs costs of travel and accommodation in most regions. Studies of the relative cost-benefit ratios of the advisory approach as compared to other forms of inservice training (e.g., courses, workshops, secondments, or release time for selected staff), which take into account the ultimate long term benefits to the preprimary field in a given location, are greatly needed.

Finally, the advisory approach, as illustrated by the Enabler Model, seems to be worth considering seriously in planning inservice education for less developed countries. The Enabler Model--defined as a "non-model" by some--puts strong emphasis on the values and goals of the locale to be served. Its principles encourage sensitivity to the readiness of the teachers to try alternative solutions to the pedagogical, social, and material problems they face within their own working environments. Additionally,

assistance is directed toward a response to the realities of the actual situations at hand. Thus, rather than approaching the local program with a predetermined curriculum model, the enabler is expected to take into account the local material resources, customs, and preferences, as well as the readiness of the available staff to try alternative practices and experiment with different approaches. The introduction of a curriculum or a set of teaching strategies which might over-tax the local personnel and material resources, no matter how well-supported by empirical data gathered elsewhere, can only lead to a sense of failure which in turn might "backlash" into a hardened position insisting on the rightness of the previous customary practices thought to be in need of amelioration.

In order to implement the principles of the advisory approach of Enabler Model within inservice education, the persons selected to do so must have had extensive experience and possess a variety of interpersonal as well as pedagogical skills, making the cost of the program a serious consideration. However, if the advice and assistance given is of optimum quality, the long term payoff can be expected to be greater than that accrued from less expensive one-shot workshops or short courses. Empirical tests of such predictions would be useful for the planning committees in less developed countries.

The Child Development Associate

By far the most radical departure from conventional training of preprimary personnel is the Child Development Associate (CDA) project, introduced in the United States in 1972. This project has deliberately attempted to upgrade the quality of teaching in Head Start classes. A Child Development Associate is defined as a person able to meet the specific needs of children in a preprimary setting by addressing their physi-

cal, social, emotional, and intellectual growth; by establishing and maintaining an appropriate child care and learning environment, and by promoting good relations with the parents they serve.

At the time the CDA program was conceived in the early 1970s, competency or performance-based teacher education and certification was enjoying great popularity and credibility in the United States, especially among state and federal education agencies, and the CDA project was heavily influenced by this trend. To date, the United States federal government has invested more than 50 million dollars in its development, testing, and application, indicating the importance given to strengthening the competence of Head Start personnel especially and other preprimary personnel generally. In the 10 years of CDA's existence approximately 11,000 individuals have been credentialed, virtually all of whom were already employed in Head Start or similar programs at the time they undertook the training and completed the credentialing process (Klein and Lombardi, in press).

The CDA system consists of several interrelated segments. The most central one is the set of CDA competencies which all candidates must demonstrate in situ in order to be awarded the CDA credential. The second major segment is CDA training, which must follow guidelines specified by the federal government in addition to being focused on preparing candidates to demonstrate their competencies. The third major segment is the CDA Assessment and Credential Award System.

CDA competencies. One of the unique features of CDA training is the specification of teaching competencies, developed by specially assembled preschool professionals and endorsed by the major preschool professional organizations. These competencies cover six broad goals of preprimary

teaching, emphasizing such areas as teacher responsibility for health and safety, stimulation of physical and intellectual development, strengthening self-concept, encouraging group participation skills, expediting cooperation between home and school, and performing other supplementary responsibilities. Each of the competency goals is further subdivided to yield a total of 13 so-called "functional areas." In addition, nine "personal capacities" are listed as essential features of the CDA requirements. These include such capacities as being sensitive to children's feelings, listening and adapting language to suit children and families, being protective of children's individuality, and so forth. The competencies, functional areas, and personal capacities form the basis upon which CDA training programs are designed, although the precise links between demonstrable teaching skill and training curricula or content are difficult to ascertain.

Training. Though no specific restrictions are placed on the manner in which training programs address the competencies, functional areas, or personal capacities, the following training criteria are recommended:

1. The training must be based on the CDA competencies and should lead to their acquisition.

2. Valid credit should be offered for CDA training.

3. Fifty percent or more of the intern's total training time must be spent in supervised field work.

4. Academic and field experiences must be integrated.

5. Training must be individualized according to each intern's strengths and needs with respect to acquisition of the CDA competencies.

6. Training must be flexibly scheduled so that length of training time and exit from the training program depend on each intern's acquisition of the CDA competencies. (Vincent & Hamby, 1981, p. 12)

Flexibility in length of training per individual is deliberately encouraged in order to take into account the wide range of experience, education, and ability in Head Start personnel. To be eligible for assessment for the credential, candidates must be 18 or over and must have had at least 600 hours of experience working with children ages 3 through 5 years; that experience must also be attained in a group setting within the 5 years preceding application for the credential (Human Development Services, 1982). No data reporting the actual range of length of training have been reported.

These guidelines and criteria have been developed in such a way that any institution with relevant experience and appropriate personnel may provide training for CDA credential candidates, adapting their own teacher training curricula in any ways they wish to ensure the candidates' acquisition of the prescribed competencies. Since the training and the credentialing segments of the CDA program are completely separate, no institutions are specifically or officially "entitled" by the government or the state to offer training or to award credentials, and no institutions or organizations are excluded from providing training. The original planners of the CDA specifically wished to make training and the subsequent credential available in a wide variety of institutions at various levels of postsecondary education. However, to date most CDA training has been subsidized by the United States government, which thereby exercises some control over the implementation of the training guidelines and criteria.

The Credential Assessment and Award System. By far the most unique aspect of the CDA system is its Credential Assessment and Award system (Ward & CDA Staff, 1976), which continues to undergo development, extension, testing, and refinement. The process begins when an applicant for candidacy has been accepted "into the credential award system." As indicated above, the applicant must be at least 18 years old and have had at least 600 hours of experience with children within the preceding 5 years. Once the applicant formally becomes a CDA credential candidate, she must select a field trainer (often an experienced member of the staff with whom she is working) and an individual to represent the parents of her pupils as well as the community. The trainers must be approved by the Bank Street CDA National Credentialing Program, a national office which carries responsibility for the assessment and credentialing processes. The assessment of competence is carried out by a Local Assessment Team (LAT) consisting of the candidate herself, the trainer, a parent/community representative, and a representative of the CDA National Credentialing Program in Washington, D. C. These four people gather information relevant to all aspects of the CDA competencies and include consideration of a portfolio prepared by the candidate which serves as a repository of evidence of work with children and parents related to the competencies. The committee makes the final decision as to whether or not to recommend the candidate to the national office for the award of the CDA Credential. In this way, the processes of training, assessment of competence, and ultimate awarding of the credential are completely separate--a real departure from conventional training and certification procedures.

Implications for other programs and research. The processes involved in the assessment and ultimate awarding of the CDA Credential are fairly

complex, involving the participants in the LAT in many hours of observation and meetings. However, a number of aspects of the CDA training and credentialing process could be adopted by others without taking on the whole system.

The competencies and functional areas constituting the "standards" of CDA are both basic and reasonably universal, and can serve as guidelines for the training of preprimary personnel in a variety of cultures and settings. Competencies deemed locally inappropriate could certainly be discarded or adapted. Another aspect of the training system of potential value in various settings is that it is flexible and individualized so that no single cohort of candidates must engage in all of the same exercises in the same sequence at the same time; many candidates will be able to demonstrate competence in some functional areas at the outset of their training and thus can move on to others for which they do need training and practice.

From the information available to date, it appears that the actual training provided to CDA candidates improves upon conventional training primarily in terms of the explicitness of its goals and objectives, and in its clear commitment to the acquisition of demonstrable skills in working with children and their families. Unfortunately, no studies of the validity of the credential have been reported as yet. Thus, while the functional areas nominated as representing essential competencies for effective teaching of young children appear to have face validity, it is not yet known whether those awarded the CDA credential and those who fail the assessment process would be judged different from each other by "blind" observers.

In addition, since the pass/fail decision to recommend the candidate for the credential award is made by the LAT, three of the four members of

which are selected by the candidate herself, the possibility of highly biased assessment is very great. (It is certainly very likely that the votes are "stacked" in the candidate's favor in advance of the assessment of competence.) In addition, the extent to which the standards applied by one LAT in one setting or community are like the standards applied by another LAT is not known. The potential for a "rubber yardstick" is indeed present. Whether universal standards for competence are important enough to forego opportunities for local input into staff quality is not a research issue, but lies rather in the realm of educational policy. The training guidelines and criteria put strong emphasis on coordinating the field work and course content in order to minimize failure. However, since the main thrust of the CDA program is on "demonstrable skills" and "observable competence in working with children," course content is programmatically in second place.

Given the generally unexplored state of the art of teacher education in the preprimary field, elements of the CDA training and credentialing system deserve empirical study. For example, the composition of the LAT provides for genuine participation of the representatives of the local community served by the candidate and gives the candidate herself a role in her own assessment. What are some of the important dynamics of the process? What happens when the LAT member representing the CDA national headquarters--a specially trained representative of the national credentialing system--differs with the local judgments of the candidate's competence? How can the overall competence of the profession be upgraded or modernized to incorporate innovative practices and new ways of thinking about children if the local (and often remote) community has such a large voice in the assessment process? On the other hand, might the

extent of local participation in the process facilitate dissemination of new ideas to the community in a way that formal meetings and lectures might not?

Some informal and anecdotal reports of the experiences of candidates who have progressed successfully through the CDA training and credentialing process suggest that its various elements (e.g., creating a portfolio, appointing an LAT, being observed in the classroom by the LAT members and receiving their feedback in the LAT meeting, etc.) create a type of "Hawthorne Effect." All the details involved in bringing together the assessment team, knowing that the parent/community representative will solicit parents' views, and so forth seem to emit a strong signal that the job for which one is trained and assessed is an important one, one in which the candidate as well as others have a real stake and a genuine interest. While so many people who work with young children, particularly in day care centers, feel undervalued and often depressed (cf. Whitebook, Howes, Darrah, & Friedman, 1982), the activity surrounding CDA training and credentialing may play a powerful role in improving morale and commitment. The kinds of potential side-benefits of the system should be studied with naturalistic methods, questions of the validity of the credential should be addressed with formal experimental methods, and both of these types of studies should be undertaken before others are urged to adopt the rather complex and cumbersome CDA system. Research confirming validity and other positive effects would then make the CDA system a potentially valuable one, particularly in regions still in the early stages of developing training methods for preprimary teachers.

CONCLUSIONS

Information concerning the education of preprimary personnel is scattered and primarily descriptive in nature. Virtually no research concerning the relative effectiveness of alternative approaches to training and education has been found. In areas in which preservice training and education is available, approaches appear to be quite varied and to be caught in the general trend toward increasing in length as well as strengthening of academic components. Research testing the relative impact of various types of content, the early versus late teaching practice, the value of training in "child observation" skills, and the application of "developmental stage" concepts to the design of preservice training would be useful. Empirical testing is also needed to address the question of the optimal proportion of preservice to inservice training, given that financial resources are limited. Preservice training seems to produce immediate effects that fade with on-the-job experience, whereas the type of inservice training represented by the advisory approach and some of its variants may produce positive effects in the long term.

FOOTNOTES

[1]The term "preprimary" is used here to refer to what takes place in group settings for children who are below the age of entry into formal primary or elementary school classes.

[2]An earlier version of this chapter is forthcoming in T. Husen and T. N. Postlethwaite (Eds.), International Encyclopedia of Education: Research and Studies (London, England: Pergammon Press, in press).

[3]The feminine pronoun is used only for the sake of convenience. The increasing number of men engaged in teaching in preprimary settings is a welcome development.

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